

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 SSO-00 ICAE-00 NSCE-00  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7378  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
INFO /AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 2523  
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 3644

E.O.11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, NU  
SUBJECT: ECUMENICAL COUNCIL ISSUES STATEMENT

REF: MANAGUA 3599

SUMMARY: THE DAY AFTER THE PASTORAL LETTER (REFTEL) AS  
ISSUED, THE SACERDOTAL COUNCIL ISSUED A MESSAGE CONDEMNING  
THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IN NICARAGUA AND SUGGESTING,  
AS ONE OPTION, THE RESIGNATION OF SOMOZA AND HIS REPLACEMENT  
BY A NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. AFTER A PERIOD OF INITIAL CONFUSION, IT IS NOW APPARENT  
THAT TWO SEPARATE PUBLIC STATEMENTS WERE ISSUED BY CHURCH  
GROUPS LAST WEEK. REFTTEL REPORTS ON PASTORAL LETTER ISSUED  
2 AUGUST. ON 3 AUGUST, "MESSAGE OF THE ARCHBISHOP AND HIS  
SACERDOTAL COUNCIL ON THE CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES CONFRONTING  
THE COUNTRY" WAS ISSUED.

THE MESSAGE BEGINS BY NOTING THAT THE CHURCH HAS  
INDICATED ON PAST OCCASIONS ITS CONCERN OVER EVENTS  
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IN NICARAGUA AND WAS AGIN DOING SO. IT THEN EXPRESSES  
CONCERN OVER THE "SPIRAL OF VIOLENCE WHICH TODAY  
APPEARS IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTAIN."

3. THE MESSAGE SAYS, "WE UNDERSTAND THAT THOSE WHO  
CHOOSE VIOLENCE OFTEN DO SO OUT OF DESPERATION AND OUT  
OF BELIEF THAT, AFTER THE BITTERNESS OF THE PROCESS, THE

HOPED FOR JUSTICE AND RIGHT WILL SHINE FORTH. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT VIOLENCE NOT ONLY THREATENS TO ALIENATE EVEN MORE THE POSSIBILITIES OF CONSTRUCTING THE KINGDOM OF GOD BASED ON BROTHERHOOD AND JUSTICE, BUT RATHER WILL END IN BEING COUNTERPRODUCTIVE TO THOSE WHO EMPLOY IT". THE COUNCIL GOES ON TO SAY THAT NICARAGUA CAN ONLY EXPECT MORE DEATHS, HATRED, VENGEANCE AND THE CREATION OF "A HUMAN CONTINGENT WHOSE MOTIVATIONS FOR ACTION EACH DAY ARE LESS THE SEARCH FOR OR PRESERVATION OF THE COMMON GOOD AND EACH DAY MORE THE BLIND DESIRE FOR VENGEANCE."

4. THE MESSAGE CALLS FOR ABANDONING A MILITARY SOLUTION TO NICARAGUA'S TROUBLES--WHETHER THROUGH GOVERNMENTAL REPRESSION OR REVOLUTIONARY INSURRECTION--SEEING IT AS THE ROAD TO "AN ABYSM OF BLOOD AND DESTRUCTION OF INCALCULABLE CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL LIFE. EXTREMISM, AS MUCH AS THE DOCTRINE OF NATIONAL SECURITY, DOES NOT FAVOR A DEMOCRATIC AND FRATERNAL FUTURE."

5. "OUR EXPERIENCE TELLS US THAT THE GLOOMY ASPECT OF NICARAGUA'S SITUATION HAS NOT DAMPENED, RATHER (IT) HAS IGNITED IN THE MAJORITY, AND WITH MORE VEHEMENCE, THE DESIRE FOR PEACE AND TRANQUILITY BASED ON JUSTICE...WE OBSERVE THAT THE MAJORITY...COINCIDES IN ACCEPTING  
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DEMOCRACY AS THE SOLUTION TO THE NATIONAL PROBLEM. AN EFFECTIVE, PLURALISTIC DEMOCRACY, BASED ON LIBERTY, JUSTICE AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS."

6. "IF THE COMMON GOOD WAS PLACED BEFORE PERSONAL OR FACTIONAL INTEREST; IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, CONSCIENTIOUS EVALUATION WAS MADE OF THE NUMBER OF DEATHS, THE ECONOMIC DESTRUCTION, THE MISERY AND THE PAIN WHICH ARE REQUIRED TO RETARD THE SOLUTION, WOULD NOT THE ESTABLISHMENT, BY MUTUAL CONCESSIONS, OF A BRIDGE-PERIOD OR TRANSITION WITH A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT BE JUSTIFIED, WHICH, AS MUCH BECAUSE OF THE PEOPLE COMPOSING IT AS BECAUSE OF THE ACTS AND MEASURES OF COMPROMISE TO BE REALIZED, WILL RESTORE CREDIBILITY AND CONFIDENCE TO ALL NICARAGUANS? BY MEANS OF A COMPROMISE OF THIS TYPE, IT IS POSSIBLE TO COORDINATE THE ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE REQUIRED FOR COEXISTENCE AS BOTHERS, AND ALSO TO FIX THE CONDITIONS FOR THE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATIZATION WHICH MUST FLOW, WITHIN A PRUDENT PERIOD, INTO A TRULY FREE ELECTION WHICH BRINGS THE GOVERNMENT TO THE PARTY OR PARTIES OBTAINING A MAJORITY. THE RULE COULD, AS ONE OPTION WITHIN THIS POLICY OF MUTUAL CONCESSIONS, PROMOTE WITH HIS RETIREMENT,

THE FORMATION OF THIS NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, WHICH, UPON OBTAINING THE SUPPORT OF ALL, WILL RESTRAIN NICARAGUA FROM FALLING INTO A VACUUM OF POWER AND ANARCHY WHICH ALWAYS THREATENS THE PROCESSES OF CHANGE."

7. COMMENT: EMB SEES THIS DOCUMENT AS THE STRONGEST INDICATION YET OF CHURCH PRESSURE ON THE GON. THE ARCHBISHOP SIGNED BOTH THIS MESSAGE AND THE PASTORAL LETTER WHICH, WHEN TAKEN TOGETHER, APPEAR TO INDICATE A SHIFT IN THE CHURCH'S POSITION TOWARD MORE ACTIVE OPPOSITION TO THE GON. OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS, LA PRENSA, INDE, TWO FACTIONS OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY AND LUIS PALLAIS, PLN SPOKESMAN, HAVE ALL PUBLICLY COME OUT IN SUPPORT OF THE CHURCH STATEMENTS, EACH, OF COURSE, IN CONFIDENTIAL

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THE CONTEXT OF A PARTICULAR POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE. PALLAIS VIEWED THE STATEMENTS AS THE BEGINNINGS OF DIALOG, WHILE THE OTHER GROUPS SEIZED UPON THE NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT AS THE REPLACEMENT FOR SOMOZA'S RULE. WHETHER THESE STATEMENTS LEAD TO ANYTHING APPROACHING A DIALOG DEPENDS TO A LARGE EXTENT ON THE ARCHBISHOP, WHOSE MEDIATION IS CRUCIAL TO ANY POSSIBILITY OF SUCCESS. DESPITE THIS APPARENT SHIFT SLIGHTLY OFF CENTER, THE CHURCH, AS PERSONIFIED IN THE ARCHBISHOP, REMAINS THE ONLY MEDIATOR WHICH, UNDER CURRENT CONDITIONS, MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH GON AND THE RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION.

8. FOR ROME. REALIZE VATICAN AFFAIRS OFFICER SARROS WILL BE ESPECIALLY BUSY DURING THESE DAYS, BUT WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE ANYTHING ON NICARAGUAN POLITICAL SITUATION HE MAY DEVELOP DURING HIS NORMAL EXCELLENT CONTACT WORK WITH VATICAN OFFICIALS. TUCKER

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## Message Attributes

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